



GOVERNMENT ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE  
(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli)  
PALKULAM, KANYAKUMARI- 629 401

## STUDY MATERIAL FOR B.A.ENGLISH

BRITISH FICTION

IV – SEMESTER



ACADEMIC YEAR 2022 - 2023

PREPARED BY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SF)

UNIT I

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

**Summary:**

When Charles Bingley, a rich single man, moves to the Netherfield estate, the neighbourhood residents are thrilled, especially Mrs. Bennet, who hopes to marry one of her five daughters to him. When the Bennet daughters meet him at a local ball, they are impressed by his outgoing personality and friendly disposition. They are less impressed, however, by Bingley's friend Fitzwilliam Darcy, a landowning aristocrat who is too proud to speak to any of the locals and whom Elizabeth Bennet overhears refusing to dance with her.

Bingley and the oldest Bennet daughter, Jane, soon form an attachment. Any serious relationship between the two, however, is opposed by Bingley's sisters (who do not approve of Jane as a wife for Bingley because of her mother's lower status) and by Darcy (who believes that Jane is indifferent to Bingley). Meanwhile, Darcy finds himself attracted to Elizabeth despite his objections to her family. He is drawn to her spirited wit and expressive eyes, and Caroline Bingley's jealous criticisms of Elizabeth can do nothing to lessen Darcy's admiration.

As Darcy grows more interested in Elizabeth, Elizabeth continues to despise him and is instead attracted to George Wickham, a handsome and personable militia officer. Wickham tells Elizabeth that his father worked for Darcy's father and that he and Darcy grew up together. Stating that he was favoured by Darcy's father, Wickham claims that Darcy disobeyed his father's bequest of a clergyman's revenue to Wickham out of selfish resentment. Wickham's tale makes Darcy appear not only proud but cruel, and Elizabeth accepts Wickham's account without question, disliking Darcy even more because of it.

In the midst of Jane and Elizabeth's developing relationships, the Bennet family is visited by Mr. Bennet's cousin, William Collins, a clergyman who will inherit Mr. Bennet's estate when he dies because of a legal stricture known as an entail. Full of apologies for the entail and praises for his patroness, Lady Catherine De Bourgh, Mr. Collins informs the Mrs. Bennet that Lady Catherine has instructed him to marry and that he plans to choose a wife from the Bennet daughters. He settles on Elizabeth, but is stunned and offended when she refuses him. He quickly turns his attention to Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte Lucas, who wants to marry for security rather than love, and the two are soon engaged and married.

At the same time, Jane is dismayed to find out that Bingley and the entire Netherfield party have unexpectedly left for London. Caroline Bingley writes to Jane that they do not intend to return, and she predicts a match between Bingley and Darcy's sister, Georgiana, who is also in London. Although Jane quietly resigns herself to a life without Bingley, Elizabeth is angry for her sister and suspects that Bingley's sisters and Darcy are trying to keep him from Jane.

Elizabeth visits Charlotte at her new home in Hunsford, Kent, and meets Mr. Collins' patroness and Darcy's aunt, Lady Catherine De Bourgh, an overbearing woman who thrives on meddling in other people's lives. Soon after Elizabeth's arrival in Kent, Darcy visits his aunt with his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam. Darcy puzzles Elizabeth with his behaviour; he seems to seek out her company, but he never says much. One day, he surprises Elizabeth by proposing to her. Still repelled by his pride and believing Darcy is responsible for Bingley's separation

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from Jane and for Wickham's misfortune, Elizabeth refuses him. The next day, Darcy gives her a letter explaining his role in influencing Bingley away from Jane and details the facts of Wickham's situation. A careful examination of the facts reveals that Darcy, while proud, is innocent of wrongdoing, leaving Elizabeth mortified at her discovery of how her own pride prejudiced her against Darcy.

After returning home for a month, Elizabeth goes on a trip with her aunt and uncle Gardiner to Derbyshire county, where they visit Darcy's estate of Pemberley. There they meet Darcy unexpectedly and are all surprised at how graciously he treats them. He calls on Elizabeth at her inn, introduces her to his sister, and invites her to Pemberley for dinner. Darcy is still in love with Elizabeth, and Elizabeth begins to have similar feelings for him.

In the midst of this promising situation, Elizabeth receives two letters from Jane telling her that Lydia has eloped with Wickham, causing Elizabeth and the Gardiners to leave for home immediately. Elizabeth fears that Lydia and the Bennet family are permanently disgraced and that her newly-discovered love for Darcy is hopeless. When Lydia is found, however, she and Wickham marry. After the wedding, Elizabeth discovers that Darcy was instrumental in orchestrating the marriage, thereby saving the reputation and marriageability of the other Bennet daughters.

Bingley returns to Netherfield and soon asks Jane to marry him. Jane, of course, accepts, and Mrs. Bennet's exultation is only lessened by her irritation at Darcy's occasional presence. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's happiness for her sister is interrupted by a visit from Lady Catherine De Bourgh, who has heard a rumour that Darcy and Elizabeth are engaged, which they are not. She lectures Elizabeth on the imprudence of such a match, and then demands that Elizabeth promise not to accept any proposal from Darcy. Elizabeth refuses, causing Lady Catherine to tell Darcy about Elizabeth's impertinence and to scold him about the folly of an engagement between them. Lady Catherine's description of Elizabeth's response to her demands gives Darcy hope that Elizabeth has had a change of heart. He proposes again and Elizabeth happily accepts.

**Character List:**

**Elizabeth Bennet** An intelligent and spirited young woman who possesses a keen wit and enjoys studying people's characters. Although she initially dislikes Darcy, circumstances cause her to reassess her negative impression of him, and she eventually falls in love with him.

**Fitzwilliam Darcy** A wealthy, proud man who falls in love with Elizabeth and reveals a generous, thoughtful nature beneath his somewhat stiff demeanour.

**Mr. Bennet** Elizabeth's ironic and often apathetic father. Unhappily married, he has failed to provide a secure financial future for his wife and daughters.

**Mrs. Bennet** Elizabeth's foolish and unrestrained mother who is obsessed with finding husbands for her daughters.

**Jane Bennet** A gentle and kind-hearted young woman who is Elizabeth's confidant and the oldest of the Bennet daughters. She falls in love with Bingley but is cautious about revealing the depth of her feelings for him.

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**Mary Bennet** The pretentious third Bennet daughter, who prefers reading over socializing.

**Catherine (Kitty) Bennet** the Bennet's peevish fourth daughter, who joins her sister Lydia in flirting with soldiers.

**Lydia Bennet** the Bennet's immature and irresponsible youngest daughter. Mrs. Bennet's favourite, she shocks the family by running away with Wickham.

**Charles Bingley** A good-natured and wealthy man who falls in love with Jane. He is easily influenced by others, especially by his close friend Darcy.

**Caroline Bingley** Bingley's shallow and haughty sister, who befriends Jane and later snubs her. She attempts to attract Darcy's attentions and is jealous when Darcy is instead drawn to Elizabeth.

**Mr. and Mrs. Hurst** Bingley's snobbish sister and brother-in-law. Mrs. Hurst spends most of her time gossiping with Caroline, while Mr. Hurst does little more than play cards and sleep.

**George Wickham** A handsome and personable fortune hunter to whom Elizabeth is initially attracted. He eventually runs off with and is forced to marry Lydia.

**Lady Catherine De Bourgh** Darcy's arrogant aunt, who dominates Mr. Collins and entertains hopes that her daughter will marry Darcy.

**Miss De Bourgh** Lady Catherine's sickly, bland daughter.

**Colonel Fitzwilliam** Darcy's well-mannered and pleasant cousin, who is interested in Elizabeth, but who needs to marry someone with money.

**Georgiana Darcy** Darcy's shy but warm-hearted sister.

**Mr. Collins** Mr. Bennet's ridiculous cousin, who will inherit Longbourn after Mr. Bennet's death. Upon Lady Catherine De Bourgh's recommendation, he seeks a bride, first proposing to Elizabeth and then to Charlotte Lucas.

**Charlotte Lucas** Elizabeth's sensible and intelligent friend, who disappoints Elizabeth by marrying Mr. Collins for money and security.

**Sir William and Lady Lucas** Charlotte's parents and the Bennets' neighbours.

**Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner** Mrs. Bennet's intelligent and cultivated brother and sister-in-law.

**Mr. and Mrs. Phillips** A country attorney and his vulgar wife, who is Mrs. Bennet's sister.

## **The Mills and the Floss**

### **Summary:**

Mr. Tulliver has decided to remove Tom from the academy where he presently studies and send him to a school where he can learn things that will raise him in the world. Mr. Tulliver has indefinite ideas on education, and he seeks advice from an acquaintance, Mr. Riley, whom

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he judges to be knowledgeable. Mr. Riley, although he has no definite opinions on the subject, recommends Rev. Stelling, the son-in-law of a business acquaintance, as a tutor.

Maggie eagerly awaits Tom's arrival. He comes with gifts for her, but when he finds that his rabbits have died because she neglected them, he repulses her. She retires heartbroken to the attic until Mr. Tulliver forces Tom to coax her down to tea.

Tom and Maggie's aunts and uncles — the Gleggs, Deanes, and Pullets — gather to discuss the boy's education, but Mr. Tulliver has already made up his mind. One result of his hasty decision is a violent quarrel with Mrs. Glegg, to whom he owes five hundred pounds. Tulliver fears that she will call her money in, and he determines to head off that possibility by paying it back at once. His sister's husband, Mr. Moss, has borrowed three hundred pounds from him, and Tulliver rides to see them to ask payment of the debt. But pity for that family's poverty overcomes him, and he lets the debt stand.

Meanwhile, Tom and Maggie with their cousin Lucy and their mother have gone to visit the Pullets. Tom becomes angry when Maggie upsets his cowslip wine and punishes her by paying no attention to her when he takes Lucy off to the pond. Maggie takes revenge by pushing Lucy into the mud. When Tom goes in to tell on her, Maggie runs off to live with the gypsies and be their queen. She finds some gypsies, but they are not what she expects, and she is very frightened before they return her to her father.

Mr. and Mrs. Glegg have been discussing the proposition of calling in her money from Mr. Tulliver. She is at last convinced that it will earn more where it is, and so she is receptive to Mrs. Pullet's suggestion (prompted by Mrs. Tulliver) that it would be best left alone. However, Mrs. Tulliver makes the mistake of telling her husband that Mrs. Pullet has interceded with Mrs. Glegg. He is so angry that he writes to Mrs. Glegg that he will pay in the money at once. To do this he finds it necessary to borrow five hundred pounds from a client of Lawyer Wakem.

Tom turns out to be the only pupil of Rev. Stelling, and he receives the full benefit of an education he does not want and cannot understand, an education consisting chiefly of Latin grammar and geometry. When he goes home at Christmas he learns that his father is about to go to law over water rights against a new neighbour, Mr. Pivart, a client of Wakem. He also learns that Philip Wakem will be his school-fellow after the holiday. On his return to school Tom quickly decides that Wakem is an inconsiderable person, a hunchback who is touchy about his deformity. However, he admires Philip's ability to draw and to tell stories of legendary heroes. During this term Maggie comes to visit Tom and grows friendly with Philip, whose cleverness she admires. Her presence, aided by an injury to Tom's foot, brings about a brief friendship between the two boys, but when Maggie leaves they quickly grow apart again.

It is two-and-a-half years later that Maggie comes to fetch Tom home with the news that their father has lost all his property in the lawsuit with Pivart. Mr. Tulliver has found that the mortgage on his property (taken out to repay Mrs. Glegg) has passed to Wakem. That news has caused him to fall insensible. His property is all to be sold, including Mrs. Tulliver's cherished possessions. The relatives agree to buy in a few things which the Tullivers need. There is some thought that Mr. Deane's company might buy the mill and retain Mr. Tulliver as manager. Unfortunately, Mrs. Tulliver tries to insure this by smoothing things with Wakem.

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Her plan goes wrong as Wakem keeps the mill for himself and takes Mr. Tulliver on as a hireling. Tom successfully applies to Mr. Deane for a position with Guest and Company, but his father requires him to swear on the family Bible that he will take vengeance on Wakem.

Maggie's life falls into a round of housework and sewing. This is broken by a visit from Bob Jakin, who has become a packman. Bob brings her a gift of books. One of these turns out to be by Thomas a Kempis, and this book leads her to a life of renunciation of the world until on a walk near her home she meets Philip Wakem. Philip convinces Maggie that she must not give up her desires and offers himself as a friend and tutor.

While Maggie struggles within herself, Tom is at work in the business world. He saves his money to pay off his father's debts, and under Bob Jakin's guidance he goes into speculations of his own. He has just saved up enough money to pay the debts when he discovers that Maggie has been meeting Philip and that they have declared their love for one another. By threatening to tell their father he forces her to give up Philip.

Soon after this the debts are paid. On his first new day as an "honest man," Tulliver meets Wakem at the mill and falls on him with a stick. Maggie tries to hold her father back, but the excitement causes him to take to his bed, and he dies there.

Several years later Maggie visits her cousin Lucy and is introduced to Lucy's love, Stephen Guest. Lucy has invited Philip Wakem to join them, for he is a friend of Stephen's. Maggie finds it necessary to ask Tom's permission to meet Philip. Lucy guesses that there was something between Philip and Maggie and forces Maggie to tell her. She begins to lay plans to bring the two together again.

Tom meanwhile has been doing very well with Guest and Company, and he is offered a share in the business. He proposes that the company try again to buy the mill and make him manager. The outcome is left indefinite as he goes off on business.

A mutual attraction begins to develop between Stephen and Maggie, but both of them resist it. Philip quickly notices it but tries not to believe in it. Lucy never notices it at all; instead, she seizes on the mill as a way of bringing Philip and Maggie together. She gets Philip to manoeuvre his father into consenting to sell the mill and allowing Philip to marry Maggie. She imagines that Tom will be so pleased at regaining the mill that he will consent to the marriage. Tom will not.

Stephen, in a moment of weakness at a dance, kisses Maggie's arm, and she repulses him. She feels that this frees her, but when she goes to visit her aunt Moss, Stephen comes there seeking forgiveness. They declare their mutual love but determine to part out of respect for Lucy and Philip. But when Maggie returns, Philip becomes convinced that she and Stephen are in love. One morning Lucy goes out of town in order to leave Maggie alone with Philip. Philip was supposed to take the two girls rowing, but he sends Stephen in his place, so that Stephen and Maggie are alone together. Carried away by the current of their emotion, they row down the river past their stopping-point and go on so far that they could not get home before dark. Stephen convinces Maggie that she should go away and be married to him. But by morning Maggie realizes what she has done, and she leaves Stephen and returns home.

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Word that she had been seen with Stephen at a town downriver has been brought by Bob Jakin, and when Maggie returns home Tom refuses to allow her in his house. Maggie and her mother take lodging with Bob Jakin, and Maggie finds work as a governess with Dr. Kenn, the clergyman of St. Ogg's. She is looked on as a fallen woman and cast out from local society. Eventually Dr. Kenn is forced to let her go because of persistent rumors that he intends to marry her.

A letter arrives from Stephen asking her to come to him. She is tempted, but resolves not to go. She plans instead to go away and find work. She is praying for guidance when the long-threatened flood breaks into Bob's riverside house. Maggie wakes the family, but in trying to get them into boats she is swept away in a boat by herself. She steers the boat to the mill and rescues Tom. They are going together to find Lucy when they are swept under by floating debris. Their bodies are found and buried together when the flood recedes.

**Character List:**

**Maggie Tulliver** The intelligent, emotionally sensitive daughter of a country mill-owner. Her life is the central story of the novel.

**Tom Tulliver** Maggie's older brother, whom she loves in spite of his strictness with her.

**Mr. Tulliver** Fiery owner of Dorlcote Mill. He is particularly attached to his daughter Maggie, whom he resembles in his generosity and emotional spontaneity.

**Mrs. Tulliver:** Mother of Tom and Maggie. She is the youngest of four Dodson sisters, and is a pleasant-looking, unintelligent woman concerned mainly with her household possessions.

**Mrs. Glegg:** Oldest of the Dodson sisters, and the one in whom the family's strict traditions are preserved in the purest state. She is cautious with money, unbending in personal relationships, and strict in observance of custom.

**Mr. Glegg:** A self-made businessman, now retired and concerned mainly with his garden and his reflections on the ways of women.

**Mrs. Pullet:** The second Dodson sister, a hypochondriac married to a scrawny gentleman-farmer.

**Mr. Pullet:** The gentleman-farmer, whose character consists almost entirely of his memory for his wife's prescriptions and his affection for lozenges.

**Mrs. Deane:** The third Dodson sister. She was once considered to have made a poor marriage, but it appears to be turning out better than any of the others.

**Mr. Deane:** A shrewd businessman, new partner in the firm of Guest and Company.

**Lucy Deane:** Tom and Maggie's cousin. By Dodson standards she is the perfect child — beautiful, obedient, and always quiet.

**Lawyer Wakem:** Archenemy of Mr. Tulliver, who considers all lawyers to be in league with the devil. Wakem's legal skill is instrumental in ruining Mr. Tulliver.

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**Philip Wakem** Son of the lawyer. He has been deformed in a childhood accident and is highly sensitive about it. An artist of moderate talent, he falls in love with Maggie when they meet at the school Philip and Tom attend together.

**Stephen:** Guest Son of the principal partner of Guest and Company. He intends to marry Lucy Deane, but falls in love with her cousin Maggie.

**Bob Jakin:** A lower-class childhood companion of Tom Tulliver. He becomes a peddler, and his glib tongue and shrewd business sense are an important aid to Tom's financial success.

**Dr. Kenn:** Anglican clergyman of the parish of St. Ogg's. He is a touchstone for the author's views on social morality.

**Rev. Walter:** Stelling A financially ambitious clergyman who is schoolmaster to Tom and Philip.

**Mr. Riley:** A local auctioneer who advises Mr. Tulliver to send Tom to school to Rev. Stelling.

**Mr. Poulter:** Tom's drillmaster at school.

**Mr. Pivart:** A new neighbour against whom Mr. Tulliver goes to law over water rights.

**Luke:** The miller who works for Mr. Tulliver.

**Mrs. Moss:** Mr. Tulliver's sister, who has made a poor marriage to an impoverished farmer.



**UNIT – II**  
**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

**Summary:**

Great Expectations is the story of Pip, an orphan boy adopted by a blacksmith's family, who has good luck and great expectations, and then loses both his luck and his expectations. Through this rise and fall, however, Pip learns how to find happiness. He learns the meaning of friendship and the meaning of love and, of course, becomes a better person for it.

The story opens with the narrator, Pip, who introduces himself and describes a much younger Pip staring at the gravestones of his parents. This tiny, shivering bundle of a boy is suddenly terrified by a man dressed in a prison uniform. The man tells Pip that if he wants to live, he'll go down to his house and bring him back some food and a file for the shackle on his leg.

Pip runs home to his sister, Mrs. Joe Gragery, and his adoptive father, Joe Gragery. Mrs. Joe is a loud, angry, nagging woman who constantly reminds Pip and her husband Joe of the difficulties she has gone through to raise Pip and take care of the house. Pip finds solace from these rages in Joe, who is more his equal than a paternal figure, and they are united under a common oppression.

Pip steals food and a pork pie from the pantry shelf and a file from Joe's forge and brings them back to the escaped convict the next morning. Soon thereafter, Pip watches the man get caught by soldiers and the whole event soon disappears from his young mind.

Mrs. Joe comes home one evening, quite excited, and proclaims that Pip is going to "play" for Miss Havisham, "a rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house."

Pip is brought to Miss Havisham's place, a mansion called the "Satis House," where sunshine never enters. He meets a girl about his age, Estella, "who was very pretty and seemed very proud." Pip instantly falls in love with her and will love her the rest of the story. He then meets Miss Havisham, a willowy, yellowed old woman dressed in an old wedding gown. Miss Havisham seems most happy when Estella insults Pip's coarse hands and his thick boots as they play.

Pip is insulted, but thinks there is something wrong with him. He vows to change, to become uncommon, and to become a gentleman.

Pip continues to visit Estella and Miss Havisham for eight months and learns more about their strange life. Miss Havisham brings him into a great banquet hall where a table is set with food and large wedding cake. But the food and the cake are years old, untouched except by a vast array of rats, beetles and spiders which crawl freely through the room. Her relatives all come to see her on the same day of the year: her birthday and wedding day, the day when the cake was set out and the clocks were stopped many years before; i.e., the day Miss Havisham stopped living.

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Pip begins to dream what life would be like if he were a gentleman and wealthy. This dream ends when Miss Havisham asks Pip to bring Joe to visit her, in order that he may start his indenture as a blacksmith. Miss Havisham gives Joe twenty-five pounds for Pip's service to her and says good-bye.

Pip explains his misery to his readers: he is ashamed of his home, ashamed of his trade. He wants to be uncommon; he wants to be a gentleman. He wants to be a part of the environment that he had a small taste of at the Manor House.

Early in his indenture, Mrs. Joe is found lying unconscious, knocked senseless by some unknown assailant. She has suffered some serious brain damage, having lost much of voice, her hearing, and her memory. Furthermore, her "temper was greatly improved, and she was patient." To help with the housework and to take care of Mrs. Joe, Biddy, a young orphan friend of Pip's, moves into the house.

The years pass quickly. It is the fourth year of Pip's apprenticeship and he is sitting with Joe at the pub when they are approached by a stranger. Pip recognizes him, and his "smell of soap," as a man he had once run into at Miss Havisham's house years before.

Back at the house, the man, Jaggers, explains that Pip now has "great expectations." He is to be given a large monthly stipend, administered by Jaggers who is a lawyer. The benefactor, however, does not want to be known and is to remain a mystery.

Pip spends an uncomfortable evening with Biddy and Joe, then retires to bed. There, despite having all his dreams come true, he finds himself feeling very lonely. Pip visits Miss Havisham who hints subtly that she is his unknown sponsor.

Pip goes to live in London and meets Wemmick, Jagger's square-mouth clerk. Wemmick brings Pip to Bernard's Inn, where Pip will live for the next five years with Matthew Pocket's son Herbert, a cheerful young gentleman that becomes one of Pip's best friends. From Herbert, Pips finds out that Miss Havisham adopted Estella and raised her to wreak revenge on the male gender by making them fall in love with her, and then breaking their hearts.

Pip is invited to dinner at Wemmick's whose slogan seems to be "Office is one thing, private life is another." Indeed, Wemmick has a fantastical private life. Although he lives in a small cottage, the cottage has been modified to look a bit like a castle, complete with moat, drawbridge, and a firing cannon.

The next day, Jaggers himself invites Pip and friends to dinner. Pip, on Wemmick's suggestion, looks carefully at Jagger's servant woman -- a "tigress" according to Wemmick. She is about forty, and seems to regard Jaggers with a mix of fear and duty.

Pip journeys back to the Satis House to see Miss Havisham and Estella, who is now older and so much more beautiful that he doesn't recognize her at first. Facing her now, he slips back "into the coarse and common voice" of his youth and she, in return, treats him like the boy he used to be. Pip sees something strikingly familiar in Estella's face. He can't quite place the look, but an expression on her face reminds him of someone.

Pip stays away from Joe and Biddy's house and the forge, but walks around town, enjoying the admiring looks he gets from his past neighbours. Soon thereafter, a letter for Pip

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announces the death of Mrs. Joe Gragery. Pip returns home again to attend the funeral. Later, Joe and Pip sit comfortably by the fire like times of old. Biddy insinuates that Pip will not be returning soon as he promises and he leaves insulted. Back in London, Pip asks Wemmick for advice on how to give Herbert some of his yearly stipend anonymously.

Pip describes his relationship to Estella while she lived in the city: "I suffered every kind and degree of torture that Estella could cause me," he says. Pip finds out that Drummle, the most repulsive of his acquaintances, has begun courting Estella. Years go by and Pip is still living the same wasteful life of a wealthy young man in the city. A rough sea-worn man of sixty comes to Pip's home on a stormy night soon after Pip's twenty-fourth birthday. Pip invites him in, treats him with courteous disdain, but then begins to recognize him as the convict that he fed in the marshes when he was a child. The man, Magwitch, reveals that he is Pip's benefactor. Since the day that Pip helped him, he swore to himself that every cent he earned would go to Pip.

"I've made a gentleman out of you," the man exclaims. Pip is horrified. All of his expectations are demolished. There is no grand design by Miss Havisham to make Pip happy and rich, living in harmonious marriage to Estella.

The convict tells Pip that he has come back to see him under threat of his life, since the law will execute him if they find him in England. Pip is disgusted with him, but wants to protect him and make sure he isn't found and put to death. Herbert and Pip decide that Pip will try and convince Magwitch to leave England with him.

Magwitch tells them the story of his life. From a very young age, he was alone and got into trouble. In one of his brief stints actually out of jail, Magwitch met a young well-to-do gentleman named Compeyson who had his hand in everything illegal: swindling, forgery, and other white-collar crime. Compeyson recruited Magwitch to do his dirty work and landed Magwitch into trouble with the law. Magwitch hates the man. Herbert passes a note to Pip telling him that Compeyson was the name of the man who left Miss Havisham on her wedding day.

Pip goes back to Satis House and finds Miss Havisham and Estella in the same banquet room. Pip breaks down and confesses his love for Estella. Estella tells him straight that she is incapable of love -- she as warned him of as much before -- and she will soon be married to Drummle.

Back in London, Wemmick tells Pip things he has learned from the prisoners at Newgate. Pip is being watched, he says, and may be in some danger. As well, Compeyson has made his presence known in London. Wemmick has already warned Herbert as well. Heeding the warning, Herbert has hidden Magwitch in his fiancé Clara's house.

Pip has dinner with Jaggers and Wemmick at Jaggers' home. During the dinner, Pip finally realizes the similarities between Estella and Jaggers' servant woman. Jaggers' servant woman is Estella's mother!

On their way home together, Wemmick tells the story of Jaggers' servant woman. It was Jaggers' first big break-through case, the case that made him. He was defending this woman

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in a case where she was accused of killing another woman by strangulation. The woman was also said to have killed her own child, a girl, at about the same time as the murder.

Miss Havisham asks Pip to come visit her. He finds her again sitting by the fire, but this time she looks very lonely. Pip tells her how he was giving some of his money to help Herbert with his future, but now must stop since he himself is no longer taking money from his benefactor. Miss Havisham wants to help, and she gives Pip nine hundred pounds to help Herbert out. She then asks Pip for forgiveness. Pip tells her she is already forgiven and that he needs too much forgiving himself not to be able to forgive others.

Pip goes for a walk around the garden then comes back to find Miss Havisham on fire! Pip puts the fire out, burning himself badly in the process. The doctors come and announce that she will live.

Pip goes home and Herbert takes care of his burns. Herbert has been spending some time with Magwitch at Clara's and has been told the whole Magwitch story. Magwitch was the husband of Jaggers' servant woman, the Tigress. The woman had come to Magwitch on the day she murdered the other woman and told him she was going to kill their child and that Magwitch would never see her. And Magwitch never did. Pip puts it all together and tells Herbert that Magwitch is Estella's father.

It is time to escape with Magwitch. Herbert and Pip get up the next morning and start rowing down the river, picking up Magwitch at the pre-appointed time. They are within a few feet of a steamer that they hope to board when another boat pulls alongside to stop them. In the confusion, Pip sees Compeyson leading the other boat, but the steamer is on top of them. The steamer crushes Pip's boat, Compeyson and Magwitch disappear under water, and Pip and Herbert find themselves in a police boat of sorts. Magwitch finally comes up from the water. He and Compeyson wrestled for a while, but Magwitch had let him go and he is presumably drowned. Once again, Magwitch is shackled and arrested.

Magwitch is in jail and quite ill. Pip attends to the ailing Magwitch daily in prison. Pip whispers to him one day that the daughter he thought was dead is quite alive. "She is a lady and very beautiful," Pip says. "And I love her." Magwitch gives up the ghost.

Pip falls into a fever for nearly a month. Creditors and Joe fall in and out of his dreams and his reality. Finally, he regains his senses and sees that, indeed, Joe has been there the whole time, nursing him back to health. Joe tells him that Miss Havisham died during his illness, that she left Estella nearly all, and Matthew Pocket a great deal. Joe slips away one morning leaving only a note. Pip discovers that Joe has paid off all his debtors.

Pip is committed to returning to Joe, asking for forgiveness for everything he has done, and to ask Biddy to marry him. Pip goes to Joe and indeed finds happiness -- but the happiness is Joe and Biddy's. It is their wedding day. Pip wishes them well, truly, and asks them for their forgiveness in all his actions. They happily give it.

Pip goes to work for Herbert's firm and lives with the now married Clara and Herbert. Within a year, he becomes a partner. He pays off his debts and works hard.

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Eleven years later, Pip returns from his work overseas. He visits Joe and Bidley and meets their son, a little Pip, sitting by the fire with Joe just like Pip himself did years ago. Pip tells Bidley that he is quite the settled old bachelor, living with Clara and Herbert and he thinks he will never marry. Nevertheless, he goes to the Satis House that night to think once again of the girl who got away. And there he meets Estella. Drummle treated her roughly and recently died. She tells Pip that she has learned the feeling of heartbreak the hard way and now seeks his forgiveness for what she did to him. The two walk out of the garden hand in hand, and Pip "saw the shadow of no parting from her."

**Character List:**

**Pip:** the narrator as well as the protagonist of the story. Pip is an orphan being raised by his sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery and her husband, Mr. Joe Gargery, a blacksmith.

**Mrs. Joe Gargery:** a bitter, angry woman who brings up Pip "by hand." That is, she whips him whenever she can and complains about what a burden he is while she does it.

**Mr. Joe Gargery:** a kind, if browbeaten, blacksmith. Though he is theoretically Pip's adoptive father, Pip sees him as an equal and a friend. Joe is uneducated and perhaps a little slow but he understands the important things in life.

**Mr. Wopsle:** the village church clerk whose dream it is to get on the pulpit and preach as he considers himself an excellent speaker. As it is, he becomes an actor.

**Mr. and Mrs. Hubble:** simple, silly folks from Pip's village. Mr. Hubble is a wheelwright.

**Uncle Pumblechook:** Joe's uncle, a well-to-do corn-chandler in the village. He considers himself upper-class and is actually a bombastic fool.

**Mr. Wopsle's great aunt:** runs the so-called school in town out of a cottage. A "ridiculous old lady."

**Bidley:** a kind, intelligent girl Pip's age who works for Mr. Wopsle's great aunt at the school. Later, she comes to work for Joe taking care of Mrs. Joe Gargery.

**Miss Havisham:** a strange, wrinkled up lady who never sees the sunlight and never gets out of her bridal gown. She's actually a very cold hearted, yet wealthy, lady who lives just outside the village in the Satis House.

**Estella:** Miss Havisham's adopted daughter. Cold and very proud but very beautiful. She's about Pip's age and is the love of Pip's life.

**Georgiana:** Aging relatives of Miss Havisham who don't have an inch of love for the woman but are greedy for her money. They buzz around Miss Havisham like flies.

**Sarah Pocket:** Aging relatives of Miss Havisham who don't have an inch of love for the woman but are greedy for her money. They buzz around Miss Havisham like flies.

**Cousin Raymond:** Aging relatives of Miss Havisham who don't have an inch of love for the woman but are greedy for her money. They buzz around Miss Havisham like flies.

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**Camilla:** Aging relatives of Miss Havisham who don't have an inch of love for the woman but are greedy for her money. They buzz around Miss Havisham like flies.

**Orlick:** a gruff evil man that Joe employs around the forge. He seems to hate just about everybody, but has a crush on Biddy.

**Matthew Pocket:** Miss Havisham's cousin, but not one of her relatives that is greedy. Matthew Pocket has charge of nine children, two nurses, and a pretty but useless wife. He also tutors young gentlemen, including Pip.

**Herbert Pocket:** Matthew's son. An extremely cheerful and honest boy about Pip's age. He became Pip's best friend in London.

**Jaggers:** rational and seemingly emotionless lawyer for Miss Havisham and for Pip. He is an excellent speaker and logician, however, and specializes in getting criminals light sentences.

**Wemmick:** Jaggers' stiff clerk by day, esoteric and generous man in private. Wemmick lives in a cottage he fashioned into a castle and fights to divide his public and private life. Wemmick becomes a good friend of Pip's (in private).

**The "Aged":** Wemmick's elderly, and quite deaf, relative (of unknown relations). The Aged lives with Wemmick in his castle and is quite happy when you nod at him.

**The "Avenger":** Pip's servant boy who Pip finds more of a nuisance than a help. Pip never has enough for him to do, so the Avenger always seems to be standing around.

**Drumle:** Another student and boarder of Matthew Pocket. He is a moody, disgruntled "spider" but comes from an upper-class family.

**Startop:** another student and boarder of Matthew Pocket. He is a good friend of Pip's.

**Miss Skiffins:** Wemmick's sweetheart.

**Clara:** Herbert secret sweetheart. She is secret because Herbert knows his mother would say she is below his "station." She's actually a sweet, fairy-like girl who takes care of her dying drunk of a father.

**Magwitch:** the convict that Pip helps at the beginning of the movie. He later returns as Pip's benefactor under the name of Provis. He is a rough ex-con, but seems to have a good heart.

**Compeyson:** Magwitch's mortal enemy and the other convict Pip saw in the marshes fighting with Magwitch. Compeyson is a gentlemanly swindler who was the fiancé that swindled Miss Havisham out of her heart.

## **Heart of Darkness**

### **Summary:**

Heart of Darkness begins on the deck of the *Nellie*, a British ship anchored on the coast of the Thames. The anonymous narrator, the Director of Companies, the Accountant, and Marlow sit in silence. Marlow begins telling the three men about a time he journeyed in a steamboat up the Congo River. For the rest of the novel (with only minor interruptions), Marlow narrates his tale.

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As a young man, Marlow desires to visit Africa and pilot a steamboat on the Congo River. After learning of the Company — a large ivory-trading firm working out of the Congo — Marlow applies for and receives a post. He leaves Europe in a French steamer.

At the Company's Outer Station in the Congo, Marlow witnesses' scenes of brutality, chaos, and waste. Marlow speaks with an Accountant, whose spotless dress and uptight demeanour fascinate him. Marlow first learns from the Accountant of Kurtz — a "remarkable" agent working in the interior. Marlow leaves the Outer Station on a 200-mile trek across Africa, and eventually reaches the Company's Central Station, where he learns that the steamboat he is supposed to pilot up the Congo was wrecked at the bottom of the river. Frustrated, Marlow learns that he has to wait at the Central Station until his boat is repaired.

Marlow then meets the Company's Manager, who told him more about Kurtz. According to the Manager, Kurtz is supposedly ill, and the Manager feigns great concern over Kurtz's health — although Marlow later suspects that the Manager wrecked his steamboat on purpose to keep supplies from getting to Kurtz. Marlow also meets the Brickmaker, a man whose position seems unnecessary, because he doesn't have all the materials for making bricks. After three weeks, a band of traders called The Eldorado Exploring Expedition — led by the Manager's uncle — arrives.

One night, as Marlow is lying on the deck of his salvaged steamboat, he overhears the Manager and his uncle talk about Kurtz. Marlow concludes that the Manager fears that Kurtz is trying to steal his job. His uncle, however, told him to have faith in the power of the jungle to "do away" with Kurtz.

Marlow's boat is finally repaired, and he leaves the Central Station (accompanied by the Manager, some agents, and a crew of cannibals) to bring relief to Kurtz. Approximately fifty miles below Kurtz's Inner Station, they find a hut of reeds, a woodpile and an English book titled *An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship*.

As it crept toward Kurtz, Marlow's steamboat is attacked by a shower of arrows. The Whites fire rifles into the jungle while Marlow tries to navigate the boat. A native helmsman is killed by a large spear and thrown overboard. Assuming that the same natives who are attacking them have already attacked the Inner Station, Marlow feels disappointed now that he will never get the chance to speak to Kurtz.

Marlow reaches the Inner Station and notices Kurtz's building through his telescope — there is no fence, but a series of posts ornamented with "balls" that Marlow later learns were natives' heads. A Russian trader and disciple of Kurtz, called "The Harlequin" by Marlow, approaches the steamboat and tells Marlow that Kurtz is still alive. Marlow learns that the hut they previously saw is the Harlequin's. The Harlequin speaks enthusiastically of Kurtz's wisdom, saying, "This man has enlarged my mind."

Marlow learns from him that the steamboat was attacked because the natives did not want Kurtz to be taken away. Suddenly, Marlow sees a group of native men coming toward him, carrying Kurtz on a stretcher; Kurtz is taken inside a hut, where Marlow approaches him and gives him some letters. Marlow notices that Kurtz is frail, sick, and bald. After leaving the hut, Marlow sees a "wild and gorgeous" native woman approach the steamer; the Harlequin hints to Marlow that the woman is Kurtz's Mistress. Marlow then hears Kurtz chiding the

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Manager from behind a curtain: "Save me! — save the ivory, you mean." The Harlequin, fearing what might happen when Kurtz is taken on board the steamboat, asks Marlow for some tobacco and rifle cartridges; he then leaves in a canoe.

At midnight that same night, Marlow awakens to the sound of a big drum. He inspects Kurtz's cabin, only to discover that he is not there. Marlow runs outside and finds a trail running through the grass — and realizes that Kurtz is escaping by crawling away on all fours. When he comes upon Kurtz, Kurtz warns him to run, but Marlow helped Kurtz to his feet and carried him back to the cabin.

The next day, Marlow, his crew, and Kurtz leave the Inner Station. As they move farther away from the Inner Station, Kurtz's health deteriorates; at one point, the steamboat breaks down and Kurtz gives Marlow a packet of letters and a photograph for safe-keeping, fearing that the Manager will take them. Marlow complies.

One night after the breakdown, Marlow approaches Kurtz, who is lying in the pilothouse on his stretcher "waiting for death." After trying to reassure Kurtz that he is not going to die, Marlow hears Kurtz whisper his final words: "The horror! The horror!" The next day, Kurtz is buried offshore in a muddy hole.

After returning to Europe, Marlow again visits Brussels and finds himself unable to relate to the sheltered Europeans around him. A Company official approaches Marlow and asks for the packet of papers to which Kurtz had entrusted him. Marlow refuses, but he does give the official a copy of Kurtz's report to The Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs with Kurtz's chilling postscript ("Exterminate all the brutes!") torn off. He learns that Kurtz's mother had died after being nursed by Kurtz's "Intended," or fiancée.

Marlow's final duty to Kurtz is to visit his Intended and deliver Kurtz's letters (and her portrait) to her. When he meets her, at her house, she is dressed in mourning and still greatly upset by Kurtz's death. Marlow lets slip that he was with Kurtz when he died, and the Intended asks him to repeat Kurtz's last words Marlow lies to her and says, "The last word he pronounced was — your name." The Intended states that she "knew" Kurtz would have said such a thing, and Marlow leaves, disgusted by his lie yet unable to prevent himself from telling it.

The anonymous narrator on board the Nellie then resumes his narrative. The Director of Companies makes an innocuous remark about the tide, and the narrator looks out at the overcast sky and the Thames — which seems to him to lead "into the heart of an immense darkness."

**Character List:**

**Charlie Marlow:**

A 32-year-old man who has "followed the sea." Marlow's story of his voyage up the Congo River constitutes almost all of Conrad's novel. He pilots the steamboat sent to relieve Kurtz and is shocked by what he sees the European traders have done to the natives.



**Kurtz:**

An ivory trader for the Company. Kurtz works out of the Inner Station and is remarkably effective at acquiring ivory. A well-educated European, he is described as a "universal genius" and begins his work in the Congo as part of a virtuous mission. However, while in the jungle, he sets himself up as a god to the natives. By the time Marlow reaches him, he is emaciated and dying.

**The Manager:**

Working out of the Central Station, the Manager oversees the Company's activities in the Congo. (He is based on a real person, Camille Delcommune.) The Manager is able to inspire uneasiness in others; Marlow later figures out that he was responsible for the wreck of his steamboat. The Manager fears that Kurtz is trying to steal his job.

**The Accountant:**

Also working out of the Central Station, the Accountant somehow manages to wear spotless clothes in the sweltering heat and complains about the groans of a dying man who is brought to his office for fear of being distracted and making clerical errors in the Company's books. He also confides to Marlow some of the Company's shady business practices.

**The Brickmaker:**

Although his name suggests the nature of his position, the Brickmaker does not make any bricks because of a shortage of materials. When Marlow meets the Brickmaker at the Central Station, Marlow suspects that he is "pumping" him for information about the Company's plans.

**The Harlequin:**

A Russian freelance trader who meets Kurtz in the jungle. He admires Kurtz immensely, telling Marlow, "This man has enlarged my mind."

**Kurtz's Native Mistress:**

She is very protective of Kurtz and leads a chant on the bank of the river when Kurtz leaves the Inner Station. She dresses in bright colours.

**The "Pilgrims":**

European agents at the Central Station waiting for a chance to be promoted to trading posts, so they can then earn percentages of the ivory they ship back.

**The Helmsman:**

A native crewman on Marlow's steamboat. He is killed by a spear during an attack on the boat.

**The Doctor:**

When in Brussels, Marlow is examined by the Doctor at the Company's headquarters. He is interested in the effects of the jungle (and the lack of restraint it offers its inhabitants) on European minds.

**Marlow's Aunt:**

Using her influence with the wife of a high Company official, she helps Marlow get his post as a steamboat pilot for the Company.

Kurtz's Intended a demure and mourning young woman;

Marlow visits her after he returns to Europe and lies to her about her fiancée's last words. She is dressed in black.

**The Narrator**

An unnamed man on board the Nellie who relates Marlow's story to the reader.

### UNIT – III

#### THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD

##### Summary:

The Murder of Roger is a work of detective fiction by British writer Agatha Christie, first published in June 1926 in the United Kingdom by William Collins, Sons and in the United States by Dodd, Mead and Company. It is the third novel to feature Hercule Poirot as the lead detective.

Poirot retires to a village near the home of a friend, Roger Ackroyd, to pursue a project to perfect vegetable marrows. Soon after, Ackroyd is murdered and Poirot must come out of retirement to solve the case.

The novel was well-received from its first publication. In 2013, the British Crime Writers' Association voted it the best crime novel ever. It is one of Christie's best known and most controversial novels, its innovative twist ending having a significant impact on the genre. Howard Haycraft included it in his list of the most influential crime novels ever written. The short biography of Christie which is included in 21st century UK printings of her books calls it her masterpiece.

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd is a 1926 mystery novel by Agatha Christie. The book is the third of Christie's novels to feature the character of Hercule Poirot, a detective who appears frequently in her work. In the novel, Poirot comes out of retirement to investigate the murder of Roger Ackroyd, a wealthy widower who is well known in his small village. Known for its twist ending, the novel was well received by critics at the time of its release. In 2013, the British Crime Writers' Association voted it the best crime novel of all time.

The novel begins with the narrator, Dr. James Sheppard, returning home from visiting Mrs. Ferrars, who died in her sleep the night before. Although the cause of her death seemed to be an accidental overdose of veronal, a sleeping drug, both Sheppard and his sister Caroline suspect suicide. Mrs. Ferrars is rumored to have poisoned her alcoholic husband, who passed away a year before she did. It is also rumored in the small village of King's Abbot that Mrs. Ferrars was romantically involved with a widower named Roger Ackroyd, who lives in the Fernly Park estate and whose deceased wife was also a heavy drinker.

The wealthy Ackroyd lives with his stepson, Ralph Paton, his recently widowed sister-in-law, Mrs. Cecil Ackroyd, and Mrs. Ackroyd's daughter, Flora. Also residing in the estate are several servants, including Ackroyd's butler Parker and Miss Russell, the housekeeper. One night, Sheppard goes to Fernly Park to have dinner with Ackroyd, Mrs. Ackroyd, Flora, his personal secretary Geoffrey Raymond, and a big game hunter named Blunt. After dinner, Sheppard meets privately with Ackroyd in his study, where Ackroyd reveals to him that Mrs. Ferrars was being blackmailed by someone who knew she had poisoned her husband. Parker, the butler, comes in to deliver a letter to Ackroyd sent to him by Mrs. Ferrars before she died. She writes in the letter that she will reveal the name of her blackmailer.

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Ackroyd asks to finish reading the letter in private, so Sheppard leaves. Outside the gates of the home, he runs into a stranger who asks him for directions to Fernly Park. When Sheppard arrives home, he receives a phone call from Parker telling him that Ackroyd has been murdered. After rushing back to Fernly Park, however, Sheppard discovers that Parker had not placed any such call. The two men find Ackroyd dead in his study, a metal dagger sticking out of his neck. Sheppard notices that the letter from Mrs. Ferrars is gone. The police are called, and all the residents of the house – Mrs. Ackroyd, Flora, Miss Russell, Parker, Blunt, Raymond, and a parlor maid named Ursula Bourne – are questioned as to their whereabouts at the time of the murder. However, it seems as if all except Ursula have alibis. Ralph Paton, on the other hand, is nowhere to be found.

Flora convinces Sheppard to ask Hercule Poirot, the retired detective and Sheppard's next-door neighbour, to help investigate her uncle's murder. Poirot accepts the task and comes out of retirement. He asks Sheppard what time he met the stranger outside the gates of Fernly Park, and discovers a goose quill and a ring with the inscription "From R" in the house. He discovers that a chair in Ackroyd's study had been moved between the time Sheppard visited him and the time his body was found. He also discovers that Ackroyd had purchased a Dictaphone shortly before his murder. The police trace the call that was made to Sheppard soon after Ackroyd's death to a public telephone at King Abbott's train station. Sheppard decides to keep a record of the case as it develops.

As Poirot investigates the murder, the secrets of many of Fernly Park's residents are revealed. The quill contains heroin and belongs to the stranger whom Sheppard met at the gates, who happens to be Miss Russell's illegitimate son, Charles Kent. Flora confesses that she had stolen money from her uncle's bedroom, and that she had initially lied about her whereabouts on the night of his murder. Blunt reveals that he is in love with Flora, and lies to try to protect her from suspicion. Ursula Bourne reveals that she is secretly married to Ralph Paton, and that the ring with the "From R" inscription had been a wedding gift. The two felt compelled to keep their marriage a secret because of the class differences between Ralph and Ursula, a lowly housekeeper. Ralph is suspected to be the murderer since his footprints were found outside the window of his stepfather's study. Blunt recalls that he overheard Ackroyd talking to someone in his study after Sheppard left, and that person is believed to be Ralph. Poirot finds out that Ackroyd had left money to Ralph, Flora, and Raymond in his will and thus all three of them had something to gain from Ackroyd's death.

Poirot invites everyone to a meeting at his home, where he announces that he has solved the case. After rehashing the evidence that he has discovered, Poirot accuses Sheppard of not being completely honest with him. Sheppard confesses that he ran into Ralph in the street shortly after the murder and helped hide him in a mental institution in case he was blamed for the act. Ralph defends Sheppard's actions, saying Sheppard was only trying to protect him. Poirot says the real murderer needs to come forward to clear Ralph's name. After receiving a telegram, Poirot says that it confirms the identity of the murderer and that he will give all his information to the police in the morning. He then dismisses the meeting, but asks Sheppard to stay behind.

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When they are alone, Poirot accuses Sheppard of being the murderer. According to Poirot, Sheppard was blackmailing Mrs. Ferrars and killed Ackroyd to keep him from reading the letter. He then played a recording of Ackroyd's voice on the Dictaphone to make it appear as if he was speaking to someone and pulled out a chair to hide the Dictaphone from view. After taking the letter from Ackroyd, he planted footprints outside the study window to frame Ralph before meeting Charles Kent at the front gates. Sheppard later instructed a patient to call him from the train station so that he would have a reason to go back to Fernly Park, which the telegram confirmed. As one of the first to discover Ackroyd's body, Sheppard managed to put the Dictaphone in his bag and take it away before anyone saw it.

Although Sheppard denies all of this at first, he eventually confesses that Poirot has discovered the truth. Poirot tells Sheppard that he will reveal what he knows to the police in the morning and that Sheppard should go home and finish his manuscript. Sheppard does, addressing the completed manuscript to Poirot. He then kills himself with an overdose of veronal, the same method by which Mrs. Ferrars had died. The major recurring themes of the novel include crime, intrigue, secrets, social class, and the role of nature versus nurture and circumstance in making a murderer. The novel also paints a vivid picture of British upper class society during Christie's time, and reveals the dark secrets that often lurked beneath the polished veneer.

**Character List:**

**Hercule Poirot:**

A world-renowned retired detective hired to investigate Roger's murder. Poirot is often regarded as a strange and ridiculous little man, with quirky habits and prominent mustache, though he proves to be a master of the study of human nature. Poirot is known to hold back his vital impressions until he is certain of the facts.

**Roger Ackroyd:**

A successful manufacturer, owner of the Fernly Park estate, and murder victim. Roger is a wealthy widower who has not remarried, though the village gossips about his romantic prospects. On the surface, Roger is viewed as wholesome and charitable. Those closest to him, however, are familiar with his hot-tempered and tight-fisted nature.

**Caroline Sheppard:**

The town gossip and Dr. Sheppard's sister. Caroline is unrelentingly critical, though she is capable of sweetness and pity on occasion. With an air of innocuousness, she closely observes the actions of the village's residents, habitually jumping to conclusions and stubbornly insisting that she is always correct. Caroline fancies herself a gifted detective and is resolute in her duty to reveal what she knows.

**Ralph Patton:**

The twenty-five-year-old adopted son of Roger Ackroyd and murder suspect. Ralph is extraordinarily handsome and charming, but he is also weak, self-indulgent, and extravagant. Though his relationship with his adopted father is strained, he is well-loved by the citizens of King's Abbot.

**Flora Ackroyd:**

The niece of Roger Ackroyd and murder suspect. Flora is Ralph's fiancée and is said to be exceptionally beautiful, with pale gold hair, deep blue eyes, and creamy, rosy skin. Some villagers dislike Flora, but all admire her. Though her disposition is mostly sunny, she is sometimes mean-spirited, resentful, and ungrateful.

**Mrs. Ackroyd:**

The widow of Roger's brother and murder suspect. Mrs. Ackroyd is a self-proclaimed martyr who constantly frets over Roger's financial obligation to care for herself and Flora. She has a silly fear of unpleasantness and a penchant for gilding the truth. Her rapid speech and distasteful opinions often cause others to flee her company.

**Miss Elizabeth Russell:**

The housekeeper at Fernly Park and murder suspect. Miss Russell has a stern eye, an acid smile, and a cast iron demeanour, though she is hardworking and reminiscently attractive to Dr. Sheppard. She battles disdain of her role as servitress with wit and cool composure.

**John Parker:**

The butler at Fernly Park and murder suspect. Parker's smug and shifty demeanour evokes distrust in the estate staff and investigators, though he is suave and efficient in the performance of his duties.

**Geoffrey Raymond:**

The secretary of Roger Ackroyd and murder suspect. Young and debonair, Raymond is mostly cheerful and considered ingenuous. He is proficient in his work for Roger and is not easily ruffled under the dire circumstances of his employer's death.

**Major Hector Blunt:**

A lifelong friend of Roger's and murder suspect. Known as "the big game man," Blunt is quiet and expressionless, with grey, brooding eyes that suggest longing to be elsewhere. He claims no interest in wealth and is the only suspect who doesn't appear to benefit from Roger's death.

**Ursula Bourne:**

The parlormaid at Fernly Park, Ralph's secret fiancée, and murder suspect. Ursula is privately weepy after Roger's murder. Dr. Sheppard considers her pleasant, though she displays disdain under Poirot's questioning. Ursula reveals herself as ultimately steadfast and resolute as the only suspect without an initial alibi.

**Inspector Raglan:**

A police inspector sent from Cranchester and official lead inspector on Roger Ackroyd's murder. Raglan is confident that the case will be straightforward. At first resentful of Poirot's presence, he is quickly won over by Poirot's charm and agrees to allow Poirot to help. Despite his theories frequently being wrong, he and Poirot find a way to tolerate each other.

### **Inspector Davis:**

The local police inspector at King's Abbot and the first inspector on the scene of the crime. Inspector Davis almost immediately suspects Parker of the murder without spending much time gathering evidence or interviewing suspects. His clumsy antics and faulty conclusions are a stark contrast with Poirot's.

### **Charles Kent:**

The undisclosed son of Miss Russell and murder suspect. Kent is branded a foreigner due to his American-like accent, though he claims to be British. His weathered appearance, shaking hands, and shifty eyes are attributed to drug addiction, though his defiance and defensiveness on questioning suggest a possible connection to Roger's murder.

## **Animal Farm**

Eric Arthur Blair (25 June 1903 – 21 January 1950), better known by his pen name George Orwell, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. His work is characterised by lucid prose, social criticism, opposition to totalitarianism, and support of democratic socialism.

Orwell produced literary criticism, poetry, fiction and polemical journalism. He is known for the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). His non-fiction works, including *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), documenting his experience of working-class life in the industrial north of England, and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of his experiences soldiering for the Republican faction of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), are as critically respected as his essays on politics, literature, language and culture.

*Animal Farm* was published on the heels of World War II, in England in 1945 and in the United States in 1946. George Orwell wrote the book during the war as a cautionary fable in order to expose the seriousness of the dangers posed by Stalinism and totalitarian government. Orwell faced several obstacles in getting the novel published. First, he was putting forward an anti-Stalin book during a time when Western support for the Soviet Union was still high due to its support in Allied victories against Germany. Second, Orwell was not yet the literary star he would quickly become. For those reasons, *Animal Farm* appeared only at the war's end, during the same month that the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The tragically violent events of the war set the stage well for Orwell's fictional manifesto against totalitarianism.

*Animal Farm* was Orwell's first highly successful novel (the second being 1984), and it helped launch him out of the minor fame of an essayist into the stratosphere of acclaimed fiction. Despite publishers' initial hesitance toward the book, the public in both Britain and the United States met it with enthusiasm. In the United States alone, it sold 600,000 copies in four years. *Animal Farm* was translated into many languages, proving its universal reach.

*Animal Farm* is an allegory or fable, a fairy tale for adults. Orwell uses animal characters in order to draw the reader away from the world of current events into a fantasy

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space where the reader can grasp ideas and principles more crisply. At the same time, Orwell personifies the animals in the tradition of allegory so that they symbolize real historical figures. In their own universe, people can become desensitized even to terrible things like deception, mistreatment, and violence. By demonstrating how these things occur in an allegorical world, Orwell makes them more clearly understood in the real world. For instance, in *Animal Farm*'s public execution, Orwell lays bare the matter of execution by having the dogs rip out the supposed traitors' throats. In this scene, the reader is led to focus not as much on the means of execution as on the animalistic, atrocious reality of execution itself.

*Animal Farm* is also a powerful satire. Orwell uses irony to undermine the tenets of totalitarianism, specifically that of Stalinism.

*Animal Farm* is universally appealing for both the obvious and the subtle messages of the fable. While the allegory's characters and events are deeply or specifically symbolic, Orwell's narrator softens some of the punches by including a gentle and un-opinionated narrator. The third-person narrator is outside the animals' world, so he does not relate any of the lies, hardships, or atrocities first-hand. Rather, he is a quiet observer.

Moreover, the narrator relates the tale from the perspective of the animals other than the dogs and pigs. In this way, the narrator's approach to the story resembles Orwell's approach to life. That is, just as Orwell developed empathy for the working class by experiencing working-class life first-hand, the narrator's tale is based on the experience of someone who is not quite an insider but no longer just an outsider. The narrator's animal perspective, as well as his reluctance to opine, fits well with the naivete of the animal characters.

One example of the narrator's indifferent approach to the tale is evident when the pigs use the money from Boxer's slaughter to buy a case of whisky. Rather than relating this event in stark terms, the narrator states impartially that on the day appointed for Boxer's memorial banquet, a carton arrives at the farmhouse followed by loud singing and "the word went round that from somewhere or other the pigs had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky" The scene also exemplifies how the narrator's naïve perspective produces a drily ironic effect.

Here are two other examples of ironic humour in the novel. In Chapter I, the narrator describes "Beasts of England" as "a stirring tune, something between 'Clementine' and 'La Cucaracha'". Anyone familiar with those two songs knows that they are childish ditties. In Chapter IX, the narrator reports that the pigs find "a large bottle of pink medicine" in the farmhouse's medicine cabinet. They send it out to Boxer, who is deathly ill. We can assume that the medicine, being pink, is the antacid Pepto-Bismol, hardly useful to someone on his deathbed. By lightening his allegory with ironic humour, Orwell makes the story more palatable without taking away from his message.



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**Character List:**

**The Animals:**

Major an old boar whose speech about the evils perpetrated by humans rouses the animals into rebelling. His philosophy concerning the tyranny of Man is named Animalism by his followers. He also teaches the song "Beasts of England" to the animals.

Snowball a boar who becomes one of the rebellion's most valuable leaders. After drawing complicated plans for the construction of a windmill, he is chased off of the farm forever by Napoleon's dogs and thereafter used as a scapegoat for the animals' troubles.

Napoleon A boar who, with Snowball, leads the rebellion against Jones. After the rebellion's success, he systematically begins to control all aspects of the farm until he is an undisputed tyrant.

Squealer a porker pig who becomes Napoleon's mouthpiece. Throughout the novel, he displays his ability to manipulate the animals' thoughts through the use of hollow yet convincing rhetoric.

Boxer A dedicated but dimwitted horse who aids in the building of the windmill but is sold to a glue-boiler after collapsing from exhaustion.

Mollie A vain horse who prefers ribbons and sugar over ideas and rebellion. She is eventually lured off the farm with promises of a comfortable life.

Clover A motherly horse who silently questions some of Napoleon's decisions and tries to help Boxer after his collapse.

Benjamin A cynical, pessimistic donkey who continually undercuts the animals' enthusiasm with his cryptic remark, "Donkeys live a long time."

Moses A tame raven and sometimes-pet of Jones who tells the animals stories about a paradise called Sugarcandy Mountain.

Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher Three dogs. The nine puppies born between Jessie and Bluebell are taken by Napoleon and raised to be his guard dogs.

**The Humans:**

Mr. Jones The often-drunk owner of Manor Farm, later expelled from his land by his own animals. He dies in an inebriated home after abandoning his hopes to reclaim his farm.

Mrs. Jones' wife, who flees from the farm when the animals rebel.

Mr. Whymper A solicitor hired by Napoleon to act as an intermediary in Animal Farm's trading with neighboring farms.

Mr. Pilkington The owner of Foxwood, a neighboring and neglected farm. He eventually sells some of his land to Napoleon and, in the novel's final scene, toasts to Napoleon's success.

Jones; Mr. Frederick An enemy of Pilkington and owner of Pinchfield, another neighboring farm. Known for "driving hard bargains," Frederick swindles Napoleon by buying

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timber from him with counterfeit money. He later tries to attack and seize Animal Farm but is defeated.

**UNIT IV**  
**ATONEMENT**

*Atonement* (2001) is an award-winning novel by British author Ian McEwan that spans the last two-thirds of the 20th century. The novel was a New York Times Bestseller for seven straight weeks and shortlisted for the Booker Prize for fiction in 2001. The 2007 film adaptation won an Academy Award, two Golden Globes, and a BAFTA Award. McEwan is critically acclaimed with over a dozen novels and other works of fiction to his name, as well as a multitude of prestigious awards and fellowships. *Atonement* is metafiction, which means that the novel draws attention to itself as a work of literature, discussing the literary devices and other storytelling elements it contains. In 2010, *Time* magazine chose *Atonement* as one of the 100 greatest English-language books since 1923. This guide uses an eBook version of the 2003 Anchor Books edition.

**Summary:**

Briony Tallis is a 13-year-old girl whose wealthy family lives on a country estate in England in the 1930s. Briony dreams of becoming a writer. Her older sister, Cecilia, graduated from Cambridge University with childhood friend, Robbie Turner. Robbie's mother is a servant on the Tallis estate. Jack Tallis, the girls' father, funded Robbie's education. Now, after working as a gardener for many years on the Tallis estate, Robbie plans to become a doctor. Briony's cousins—15-year-old Lola and nine-year-old twins, Jackson and Pierrot—visit the Tallis estate while their parents are settling a difficult divorce.

When the cousins arrive, Briony decides to stage a play, *The Tale of Arabella*, which she writes. Intended to impress her older brother, Leon, the play fails because Briony is too short-tempered to direct her unruly cousins. Meanwhile, Robbie and Cecilia are attempting to understand their feelings. Despite Briony's precociousness, she fails to understand the nature of Cecilia's and Robbie's relationship. She watches from a window as they argue in front of a fountain in the garden: a vase is broken, and Cecilia removes her clothes to wade into the fountain and collect the pieces. From afar, Briony believes that Robbie is threatening her sister, and she worries for Cecilia's safety. Later, Robbie asks Briony to deliver a letter to Cecilia. Due to a mistake, however, he gives her the wrong letter. Rather than the apology he wrote, he hands Briony an early draft littered with vulgar language. Unable to resist, Briony reads Robbie's letter; the language disgusts her. When Robbie realizes his mistake, he tries to apologize to Cecilia, to whom Briony has given the letter. His attempt to apologize brings their unresolved romantic tension to the surface, and they have sex in the family library. Briony walks in during their passionate encounter; as she is too young to understand sex, she again surmises that Robbie is hurting Cecilia.

Later, the family gathers for dinner. Leon has brought his friend, Paul Marshall, who is the heir to a confectionary fortune. During the meal, the family realizes that the twins are missing. Search parties form and fan out over the estate. Briony finds Lola, who had been captured and is being raped by a man who flees the scene. It is dark, and Briony cannot identify the man due to the lack of light; Lola is too traumatized to speak. With the image of Robbie and Cecilia's encounter in her mind, Briony convinces herself that Robbie is the rapist. She

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accuses him of raping Lola, announcing her suspicions to the police even though she could not see clearly the perpetrator in the dark. She mentions the argument she witnessed between her sister and Robbie, as well as the letter and the events in the library. The police arrest Robbie. Cecilia and Robbie's mother are the only characters who believe that he is innocent while Briony is convinced that she saved her sister from a violent man. Cecilia is so distraught that she leaves her family and severs contact with them.

Robbie serves several years in prison and is released only on the condition that he enlist in the British Army to fight in World War II. Cecilia remains estranged from her family due to their accusations against Robbie. Robbie and Cecilia stay in touch through letters while he is in the military. Before he is shipped to France, they meet briefly. During their 30-minute encounter, their old romantic feelings return; they kiss, and Robbie promises to return after the war.

Robbie's time in the army is difficult. The German army's advances push the British and French forces back; Robbie takes part in the infamous battle at Dunkirk, in which tens of thousands of British and French soldiers are forced to retreat across the British Channel in small civilian boats. Robbie is injured as he travels to Dunkirk. During this time, the memory of Cecilia gives him courage; his desire to see her again keeps him alive. He remembers his past on the Tallis estate and wonder why Briony accused him of raping Lola. He reaches Dunkirk the day before the operation begins in earnest. He lays down to sleep as the German army advances.

Years later, Briony's past haunts her. She regrets accusing Robbie of rape and destroying her relationship with her sister. Now, she is convinced that Paul Marshall raped Lola. She has yet become a writer. Instead, she has turned down her place at Cambridge University to become a nurse and help with the war effort. She writes in her spare time but not as enthusiastically as she once did. While working as a nurse in London, she meets a young injured French man named Luc. Due to the severity of his wounds, she knows that he will not live for very long. Briony speaks to Luc, using the fragments of French she remembers from her school days. He talks about his life and a girl he once nearly married. Before he dies, Luc asks Briony whether she loves him. In that moment, she says, she does. Luc dies, and Briony imagines the life she might have led with him. Briony learns that her cousin Lola is about to marry Paul Marshall. She attends the wedding and then visits Cecilia in London. During her visit, she meets Robbie, who is on leave and visiting Cecilia. Robbie's presence surprises her. Neither Robbie nor Cecilia can forgive Briony for what she did, though Briony is determined to do what she can to atone for her mistake. Despite launching a legal effort to clear Robbie's name, she knows that Lola's decision to marry Paul will mean that Paul will never be prosecuted for the rape.

In the epilogue, Briony reveals that she grew up to become a writer. Now 77, she is writing in a diary in the year 1999. The elderly Briony has been told that she will soon lose her mental faculties due to a rapid onset of dementia. Her diary entry reveals that the majority of the second part of the novel was actually an invention; Briony is the author of the events, having imagined them as different as how they actually occurred. Robbie did not return home from France, nor did he reunite with Cecilia. Instead, he died at Dunkirk before he could be evacuated. Cecilia died in London during a bomb attack while seeking cover in an underground

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train station. Briony did not visit their home in 1940 though she did attend the wedding of Paul Marshall and Lola. Briony knew that her sister was grieving the recent death of Robbie, but she could not bring herself to visit Cecilia due to the pain she knows that she caused her sister. Instead, Briony has used her writing talents to try to atone for the pain and suffering she caused by falsely accusing Robbie of rape. She hopes that her novel, which contains her imagined version of events, will provide some way for Robbie and Cecilia to finally be together.

**Character List:**

**Briony Tallis** – The younger sister of Leon and Cecilia Tallis, Briony is an aspiring writer. She is a thirteen-year-old at the beginning of the novel and takes part in sending Robbie Turner to jail when she falsely claims that he assaulted Lola. Briony is part narrator, part character and we see her transformation from child to woman as the novel progresses. At the end of the novel, Briony has realised her wrongdoing as a "child" and decides to write the novel to find atonement.

**Cecilia Tallis** – The middle child in the Tallis family, Cecilia has fallen in love with her childhood companion, Robbie Turner. After a tense encounter by the fountain, she and Robbie do not speak again until they meet before a formal dinner. When Robbie is falsely accused of rape shortly after, Cecilia loses her love to jail and war, and chooses not to contact any members of her family again.

**Leon Tallis** – The eldest child in the Tallis family, Leon returns home to visit. He brings his friend Paul Marshall along with him on his trip home.

**Emily Tallis** – Emily is the mother of Briony, Cecilia, and Leon. Emily is ill in bed for most of the novel, suffering from severe migraines.

**Jack Tallis** – Jack is the father of Briony, Cecilia, and Leon. Jack often works late nights and it is alluded to in the novel that he is having an affair.

**Robbie Turner** – Robbie is the son of Grace Turner, who lives on the grounds of the Tallis home. Having grown up with Leon, Briony and Cecilia, he knows the family well. He attended Cambridge University with Cecilia and when they come home after graduating, they fall in love. Robbie is sent to jail for three and a half years, when Briony falsely accuses him of raping Lola.

**Grace Turner** – The mother of Robbie Turner, she was given permission from Jack Tallis to live on the grounds. She has become the family's maid and does laundry for the Tallises. When her son is falsely accused of raping Lola, only she and Cecilia believe he is innocent, and Grace chooses to leave the Tallis family.

**Dolores 'Lola' Quincey** – A 15-year-old girl who is Briony, Cecilia, and Leon's cousin. She comes, along with her twin brothers, to stay with the Tallises after her parents' divorce. Lola was supposed to assume the main role in Briony's play, until it was cancelled. She is also subject to rape while staying at the Tallis household. Lola appears later in the novel as a mature woman, married to Paul Marshall. She is red-headed and fair-skinned with freckles.

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**Jackson and Pierrot Quincey** – Lola's younger twin brothers and Briony, Cecilia, and Leon's cousins. They come, along with their sister, to stay with the Tallises after their parents' divorce. Briony wants the twins to take a role in her play, but disputes mean the play is cancelled, upsetting them both. Pierrot appears later in the novel as an old man while his brother has died.

**Danny Hardman** – The handyman for the Tallis family. Robbie and Cecilia suspect he is responsible for Lola's rape until Briony tells them otherwise, prompting Robbie to say they owe him an apology.

**Paul Marshall** – A friend of Leon. He rapes Lola outside the Tallis household after dark; Briony, however, accuses Robbie of Lola's rape, and many years later Lola and Paul marry. Paul Marshall also owns a chocolate factory that manufactures 'Amo' bars – fake chocolate energy bars supplied to army troops, which earn him a considerable fortune.

**Corporal Nettle** – Nettle is one of Robbie's two companions during the Dunkirk evacuation. In the fourth and final section of the novel, an elderly Briony alludes to an "old Mr. Nettle" from whom she received a "dozen long letters" but whether this is the same person is not made exactly clear.

**Corporal Mace** – Mace is the second of Robbie's two companions during the Dunkirk evacuation. He is last seen presumably rescuing an RAF man from a possible lynching by some infantrymen under the guise of wanting to do harm by drowning him in the "bloody sea".

**Betty** – The Tallis family's servant, described as "wretched" in personality.

### **The Little Stranger**

Sarah Ann Waters born 21 July 1966 is a Welsh novelist. She is best known for her novels set in Victorian society and featuring lesbian protagonists, such as *Tipping the Velvet* and *Fingersmith*.

*The Little Stranger* (2009), a gothic ghost story by novelist Jessica Waters, tells a tale of family, loss, legacy, and love with elements of the supernatural. While Waters is typically known for her plot-twisting works with lesbian narrators, this work is a decided departure from her signature style and plot. Critics' consensus regards this work as one in which a sense of terror and suspense steadily builds in a straightforward way that some say results in an anti-climactic finish. Waters said, "I tried to keep it strange, keep what was happening genuinely odd, without closing it down with a neat explanation at the end." The ambiguity of the work is integral in its thematic development, driving the work's central tone. The work is set in post-World War II London. Receiving a warm reception and high critical praise, the book was adapted into a cinematic production in late 2018.

The narrator, Doctor Faraday, is called to Hundred Halls, the Ayres' family estate, to treat the oldest son, Roderick, for badly-healed injuries he sustained as a pilot during the war. Faraday is bewildered by the sense of history, decay, and an air of strangeness he feels as he tours the sizeable property past its prime due to economic decline, high taxes, and the expensive upkeep costs driving the Ayres family further into poverty as he interacts with the people who live and work there.

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Roderick's mother, the lady of the estate, decides to throw a large party to encourage her only unmarried daughter, Caroline, to meet some eligible men. Tragedy strikes when the family's older and friendly Labrador attacks a young child.

After the attack, Roderick's behaviour noticeably alters; at first, his mood and sudden drinking problem seem a consequence of stress from managing the family's dismal finances. When confronted, Roderick divulges that on the night of the dog's attack, a dark invisible energy targeted him. He confesses that he let the force fixate on him to divert its attention from his mother and sister. Burn marks appear on Roderick's wall, and Caroline wakes to find Roderick's room on fire; Roderick is committed to a mental ward.

Faraday develops a close connection with Caroline, teetering between casual friendship and romantic interest. His conversations with each member of the Ayres family and their two maids confirm that something odd is happening at Hundred Halls. He soon begins to believe the house could be "consumed by some dark germ, some ravenous shadow-creature, some 'little stranger' spawned from the troubled unconscious of someone connected with the house itself." When Dr. Faraday consults his peer physicians, the odd occurrences are rationalized using scientific theories of the body and mind; however, he remains sceptical that such easy explanations account for the apparent supernatural activities.

The activity seems to escalate, becoming more frequent and aggressive, as if actively seeking acknowledgement. The maids are particularly spooked, hearing their call bells, the phone ringing, and other sounds in the middle of the night. Curious childish writing appears on the walls soon after in these same spots. Looking for the source of one of these strange sounds one night, Mrs. Ayres is locked in the nursery of her deceased daughter who died of diphtheria when she was merely eight. Caroline and the maids free Mrs. Ayres; after the incident, she takes comfort in what she believes are her daughter Susan's interactions, reading the more violent events as mere anger for her death and eagerness for their reuniting. The maids soon discover the corpse of Mrs. Ayres, who has hanged herself to join her daughter on the other side.

Caroline and Faraday decide to marry on the same day as Mrs. Ayres's funeral. The date of the wedding ceremony is set a short six weeks in the future. As the date approaches Caroline loses interest in the event's arrangements and the union altogether. Eventually, she calls off the affair, declaring her intent to sell the Ayres estate. Faraday attempts to talk Caroline out of her self-destructive impulses without success. While he is detained at work on the evening they were supposed to marry, Caroline meets a mysterious end. According to the maid, Caroline went upstairs, and with a startled, "You!", fell to her death below. In the years following, Faraday visits the vacant property with the hope of glimpsing what Caroline saw just before her death. Ultimately, he is unable to find the answers for which he is looking.

### **The Nature of Evil**

Evil, of course, is the primary theme of the book; however, it is not really evil itself, but the nature and interpretation of this evil that is the key theme. There are also several philosophical questions thrown up here; can a house, an inanimate object, be imbued with evil? Can evil spirits possess an environment even if the people living in it are essentially good? Is there really such a thing as malevolence or is it something that we imagine when we are scared?

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There is definitely an evil presence in the house - the "little stranger" of the title - but each of the characters thinks that it is caused by somebody different. Dr Faraday does not believe in evil at all in the abstract sense, and only believes in a malevolence of spirit caused by a mental condition. Throughout, the evil that is plaguing the family is the main theme, and the nature of it is central to the entire plot of the book.

**Science vs. Philosophy:**

A theme that branches off from the key theme of evil is the constant battle between science and philosophy - or in this case, the explained versus the unexplained. We also see how intractable those who believe wholeheartedly in science can be when it comes to explaining a feeling or something that is essentially un-provable. Dr Faraday goes to great lengths to defend the honour of science, even when it is clear he is clutching at straws. He attributes Mrs Ayres' conviction that the spirit in the house is her deceased daughter who is trying to reunite them more quickly to the fact that she is overwhelmed with emotion, using a medical psychology diagnosis to explain her feelings. He says that Catherine's emotional stress is causing her to believe that it is her brother Roderick who is somehow telepathically demonstrating his anger about being locked up in an institution. As the book progresses and it becomes obvious there really is a malevolent force at work in the house, he doggedly refuses to let go of his scientific explanations for everything and blames the noisy plumbing in the house for the sounds that are terrifying the family and the staff.

**Character List:**

**Dr Faraday:**

The protagonist of the novel, we see the action through the eyes of this first-person narrator. However, questions about Faraday's reliability are questionable; he is looking back on events years later and is clearly influenced by his own bias - most notably the 'chip-on-his-shoulder' surrounding his working-class background. Financing his medical degree ultimately contributed to his parents' early deaths due to financial problems. Important to note is Faraday's position as a doctor, a respectable member of society, meaning he can gain access to private affairs of the family that we wouldn't otherwise see. The main premise of the novel regards Faraday's obsession with and desire to "possess" a piece of Hundreds: this manifests into a form of unconscious energy that, arguably, haunts Hundreds and the Ayreses. Dr Faraday is never directly described, so the reader is left to create an image of him based on his own expression, such as his "bachelor" lifestyle that he so despises.

**Caroline:**

The middle child of the Ayres family, who becomes Dr Faraday's love interest despite a large age gap. Described as a hardy, independent woman (unlike traditional images of women in this era), Caroline lives at home still, unmarried, and happy with the company of her dog, Gyp. Waters describes Caroline as "plain", never beautiful or stereotypically feminine. We learn that she went to work during wartime and was called back to Hundreds to look after her brother when he was injured- a career that she despises as taking her freedom. We see Caroline as a strong-willed character, even calling off her wedding to Faraday in order to follow her own dreams.



**Roderick:**

After the death of his father, is left as the man in charge of the family estate - a burden that contributes to his mental failings. Having been a pilot in WW2, Rod, in the opinion of Faraday, experiences what we now know as PTSD. On top of this, his leg was badly injured and gives him trouble often. Rod is presented as a protective, self-blaming character who feels responsible for ensuring his family escape the “haunting” he is subject to. He drinks heavily and is eventually committed to a mental hospital after reverting to a childlike state of shock, where he spends the rest of the novel.

**Mrs Ayres:**

The mother of the Ayres family, living at Hundreds with her two living children. Initially, she appears eccentric but welcoming to Faraday, and concerned for Betty’s health (she calls the doctor out). It becomes clear, however, that the death of her first daughter, Susan, is a source of distress for Mrs Ayres, and her crucial weakness. As the novel progresses, Mrs Ayres withdraws further into her own mind and similarly to Rod, displays childlike tendencies, as well as a distinctly maternal affection for Betty, rather than her own children.

**Betty:**

The young maid who has been brought to live at Hundreds and care for the house. It is Betty who initially causes Faraday to come to Hundreds, as well as introduces the supernatural theme of “ghosts” and “bad thing(s)” that she senses in the house. Forming a close bond with Mrs Ayres, Betty lives in the house until all the family have left- arguably the only survivor of the house’s curse, perhaps as she’s not exactly family. Appearing again at the end of the novel, Betty follows traditional roles for a woman, meeting a man and eventually working in a factory.

**Dr. Seeley:**

A friend and colleague of Faraday, the original doctor for the Ayreses. He brushes off any supernatural mention with scientific reason, seeming to blame women’s hormones and energy as the root of any unexplained goings on. He appears as a stereotypical ‘man’s man’, displaying almost sexist attitudes to Caroline at the dance - encouraging Faraday to wed her. Waters doesn’t present Seeley as a particularly likable character, although he does provide respite for Faraday.

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## UNIT V

### THE SENSE OF AN ENDING

#### Summary:

The novel opens with its protagonist and narrator, Tony Webster, recalling fragmented images that have returned to him. A shiny inner wrist, a hot pan steaming in a sink, ejaculate being washed down a drain, a river rushing backward.

Tony, a sixty-year-old retired arts administrator who lives in London, goes back in his memory to the early 1960s. Tony is still in high school, where he has a close group of three friends. Adrian Finn is the cleverest of the group, answering teachers' questions with complex philosophical arguments. When a boy in their class hangs himself because a girl he slept with gets pregnant, they spend hours discussing the philosophical issues around knowing exactly what happened when everything they know about the death comes from rumours.

After graduating, Adrian moves on to Cambridge University, one of the top two universities in England. Tony goes to Bristol and starts dating seriously for the first time. Soon his girlfriend, Veronica, asks him to spend the weekend with her at her family's home. Tony is uncomfortable with the way he perceives he is being looked down upon as lower class. One morning he goes downstairs and finds that he and Veronica's mother, Sarah, are the only ones still at home. She warns him, in a cryptic statement, not to let Veronica get away with too much. She won't elaborate, and laughs as she throws the hot egg pan in the sink.

Tony and Veronica break up, only to sleep together for the first time shortly afterward. Veronica is angry when Tony doesn't want to keep seeing her, and they agree they cannot be friends. During their final year of college, Tony learns from Adrian that he and Veronica are now dating. Tony replies by saying he doesn't mind, but he dwells on the issue and sends a letter denouncing the couple and suggesting that Veronica is emotionally damaged because of some suspected abuse from her brother or father.

Several months later, Adrian commits suicide. He leaves behind a suicide note explaining that a person must end their life once they have concluded it is the rational thing to do. Tony cannot help but admire Adrian and how he has never veered from his philosophical beliefs, and yet he thinks it is a terrible waste.

In the present, Tony has married, had a child, divorced, retired, and now lives alone in a flat. Tony is confused to learn that Sarah Ford—Veronica's mother—has left him five hundred pounds in her will. She also leaves him a couple of documents, one of which is a letter in which Sarah says Adrian was happy in the last months of his life. The other is Adrian's diary, which Veronica refuses to hand over to Tony. He sends email upon email asking her to send it, but she only sends him one page: a cryptic calculation in which it seems Adrian is reasoning out the logic behind his suicide.

They meet on the Millennium Bridge in London and she gives him the letter he wrote to Adrian. In it, he suggested Veronica has emotional problems and Adrian should go on his own to ask her mother about what her "damage" is. When he reads the letter over again, Tony

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is struck by how immature and cruel it is; clearly he was jealous of their relationship and wanted to hurt the couple. He still wants to see the rest of the diary, though, and eventually Veronica suggests they meet up. She drives him to see a group of developmentally disabled men being escorted on a walk by a caregiver. She gets out of the car while Tony waits in the passenger seat. The group all appear to know her well, and they call her Mary.

Tony cannot fathom the significance of the encounter, and Veronica chooses not to elaborate. Tony goes back to the area in North London several times over the next few weeks and eventually finds the group drinking in a pub. He tells one of the men he is a friend of Veronica's, which seems to upset him.

The man reminds Tony of Adrian, and he emails Veronica immediately to tell her he is sorry for never realizing that she and Adrian had a son together. He believes he understands now everything Veronica has been through. In an angry response, she tells him he doesn't understand, and he never did.

Tony is baffled and so goes back to the pub, this time meeting the care worker he saw with the men. The care worker reveals that the man is Veronica's brother, not her son. His mother, Sarah Ford, died a few months earlier and the man, who is called Adrian, has not been taking it well.

The novel ends with Tony finally piecing together what Adrian's cryptic calculation had been. Tony was a major part of that calculation, because if he hadn't sent his cruel letter denouncing the couple, Adrian never would have gone to speak with Sarah about "damage," and Adrian's affair with Sarah never would have started and she never would have gotten pregnant. In the end, Tony realizes his letter precipitated Adrian's suicide.

### **Character List:**

#### **Tony Webster:**

Tony is the novel's protagonist and first-person narrator. At sixty, Tony is bald, divorced, and has retired from his job as an arts administrator. Now retired and living alone in the 2000s, Tony looks back on his 1960s high school friendship with Adrian Finn and his first serious relationship with a girl named Veronica Ford. Adrian and Veronica later dated, which outrages Tony and led him to send a cruel letter denouncing their relationship and wishing them ill. Soon after, Adrian killed himself. Forty years later, Tony is named in Veronica's mother's will and has been given Adrian's diary. However, Veronica won't hand the diary over. To see Veronica again rekindles Tony's attraction to her, and he second-guesses his memories of how awful she had been to him. He also regrets the hurtful letter he sent. Eventually, Tony understands that Veronica continues to have a grudge against him because his letter led Adrian to meet with Veronica's mother. That meeting led to an affair, Veronica's mother becoming pregnant, and Adrian killing himself as a result. The novel ends with Tony coming to terms with how he contributed to the accumulation of forces that ruined several lives.

#### **Adrian Finn:**

Adrian is one of Tony's high school friends. After his parents' divorce, Adrian joins Tony's school and is "absorbed" into Tony's small clique, who all vie for Adrian's approval.

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Unlike the other boys, Adrian is studious and doesn't shy away from impressing teachers and fellow students with his intelligence. After high school, he studies moral sciences at Cambridge on a scholarship. Adrian later enters a relationship with Veronica and informs Tony that they are together. When Tony writes a cruel letter suggesting Adrian should talk to Veronica's mother about "damage" from her past, Adrian begins an affair with the mother, impregnating her. Adrian reasons to himself that suicide is his most moral and logical option, and so cuts his wrists in the bath.

**Veronica Ford:**

Veronica is Tony's girlfriend while he is going to university. Tony is frustrated when she won't have sex with him, something that only happens only once they have broken up. After having sex, the two-part ways on bad terms. Months later, Tony learns in a letter that Veronica is dating Adrian. Tony replies with a letter disparaging Veronica, claiming she probably has some "damage" (sexual abuse) in her past. Forty years later, Veronica is just as difficult as she used to be, as far as Tony can tell. In a series of hints and clues, she brings him to realize how his cruel letter affected her life by setting in motion Adrian's and Sarah's affair, Sarah's pregnancy, and Adrian's suicide.

**Sarah Ford:**

Sarah is Veronica's mother. Tony meets her during a weekend at the Ford family home in the 1960s. Alone together in the kitchen, she warns Tony to not let Veronica get away with too much but won't elaborate. Forty years later, she dies of a stroke and leaves Tony five hundred pounds in her will, along with Adrian Finn's diary. Tony eventually realizes she had the diary because she and Adrian were having an affair before his suicide. He also learns that she became pregnant with a son she named Adrian.

**Margaret Webster:**

Margaret is Tony's ex-wife. After twelve years of marriage, she started an affair. Following an unsuccessful second marriage, Margaret has a civil, friendly relationship with Tony, often meeting him for lunch and openly discussing things that trouble him. However, she tells him he is "on his own" when she suspects he has rekindled his attraction to Veronica forty years later.

**Susan Webster:**

Susan is Tony's daughter with Margaret. She has her own children and is married to a doctor. Although Tony repeats that his relationship with her is "fine," she rarely gets in touch with her father. Tony speculates that she must worry about having to care for him as he ages.

**Jack Ford:**

Jack is Veronica's older brother. When Tony visits the family's home in the 1960s, Jack teases him for his formality, giving Tony the sense, he does not approve of him. Tony speculates that Jack may have somehow abused his sister. Decades later, Jack helps Tony over email by providing Veronica's email address.

### **Adrian Jr.:**

Adrian's and Sarah's developmentally disabled son and Veronica's half-brother. A tall, gangly man with thick glasses, Adrian lives in a group home for other disabled adults. He had difficulty processing his mother's death. He cowers from Tony when they meet, as if Tony is bad luck.

Alex is one of Tony's high-school friends. Instead of university, Alex goes to work at his father's business. Alex and Tony more or less lose touch while Tony is at Bristol, but he and Alex meet after Adrian's suicide to discuss what happened.

Colin is another of Tony's high school friends. As with Alex, Colin and Tony strongly influence each other, leading Colin's mother to refer to Tony as Colin's "dark angel." Tony loses touch with Colin while they are at different universities.

### **Themes:**

#### **Time**

The deeply personal relationship individuals have to time is one of the most important themes in *The Sense of an Ending*. Barnes introduces the theme at the beginning of the book as Tony comments on how he has never understood time very well, even as he concedes that "we live in time — it holds us and moulds us." Tony's lack of grasp on time stems from how "the smallest pleasure or pain" can make time malleable: "Some emotions speed it up," he says, "others slow it down; occasionally, it seems to go missing." Time also arises when Tony recalls how he and his friends wore their watches with the faces on the inside of the wrist, making time feel like a more personal, private thing. As the book goes on, Tony expands on his comments, making a division between the objective time kept on clocks and the personal time influenced by feelings and memory. He calls personal time "the true time," a paradoxical statement that expresses a conviction that the more subjective type of time is truer to a person's experience than measurable time. Although this type of time is at the mercy of changing feelings, its malleability also allows Tony to relive his past, filling in old time with renewed memories as he develops a more accurate idea of who he was and is.

#### **The Mutability of Memory**

A natural companion to time, the mutability of memory is another key theme in *The Sense of an Ending*. Barnes introduces the theme on the opening page when Tony lists fragmented memories whose significance will be revealed later in the book. The last memory is of a bathtub of cold water behind a locked door—the bathtub in which Adrian Finn kills himself while his flatmates are away for the weekend. Tony acknowledges to the reader that he never saw Adrian dead in the bath, but the image nonetheless exists in his memory, just as vivid and real as the things he actually witnessed. With Tony's commentary, Barnes subtly establishes the importance of memory as something that is recreated with every recollection, making memory something that composed of just as much imagination as fact. As with time, Tony fails to grasp his memory objectively. Instead, he only has his imperfect, subjective, mutable memory to rely on. The division between what actually happened and what he remembers having happened causes conflict when Tony discovers that his treatment of Veronica and Adrian was far crueller than he wanted to believe. By the end of the novel, he

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must incorporate the new knowledge he has learned about himself into his original memory of the events that make up the first part of the book. Through depicting Tony's mental and emotional processing, Barnes shows readers the extent to which memory—and therefore history—is always liable to change.

**Suicide:**

Another of the novel's dominant themes is suicide. This theme first arises when Robson, a fellow sixth-form student, hangs himself while Tony is in high school. The event, shrouded in mystery, prompts Tony and his friends to speculate about what might have motivated Robson; they are also envious of Robson, because his life, though short, was dramatic enough to be "the stuff of Literature." As a Camus reader, Adrian speaks of how suicide is the most fundamental question a human must grapple with—whether to continue living out an absurd, meaningless existence, or end it. Adrian also cites Freud's theory of the death drive (Thanatos) and the pleasure/sex drive (Eros), opposing yet interwoven desires that determine human experience. With Robson's suicide, Adrian says that "Thanatos wins again." Later in the book, Adrian kills himself. Unlike Robson, he leaves behind a lengthy suicide note which he wishes the authorities to make public. However, full clarity around his reason for wanting to die is not attained until Tony learns Adrian had fathered a child with Veronica's mother. As for Robson, the fear and shame of dealing with an unplanned pregnancy prompted Adrian to end his life. And although Adrian sought to justify his decision with logic, philosophy, and poeticism, Tony and Alex conclude that his suicide, as much as it is "impressive," cannot escape also being a "fucking terrible waste."

**Remorse:**

Remorse—deeply felt guilt or regret for something you have done wrong—is a major theme in *The Sense of an Ending*. Although the theme is vital to the narrative, it makes a subtle entry into the story, developing gradually as Tony leads the reader through his recollections. As a young man, Tony has a tendency to view himself as a victim, perceiving Veronica's actions toward him with suspicion, perceiving her family attitudes as condescending, and perceiving Adrian's decision to date Veronica as an unforgivable betrayal. Angry, Tony feels himself entitled to denounce Adrian and slander Veronica in his letter. It is not until he is confronted with the letter forty years later that Tony feels the sharp teeth of remorse (a word that comes from the Latin for "to bite"). Gripped by regret long after he can do anything about it, Tony's reflexive instinct to view himself as a victim returns, and he justifies his past cruelty as the immature venting of a wounded young man. He does not fully accept his guilt until the end of the novel, when he finally understands what Veronica has been trying to tell him. Were it not for Tony's letter, Adrian might not have started the affair with Sarah and killed himself. Tony is left with nothing to do but sit in the discomfort of knowing who he once was and how one inconsiderate decision on his part ruined people's lives.

**Grief:**

Grief and the burden it cause is another important theme in *The Sense of an Ending*. Barnes introduces the theme at the beginning of the book through Tony's narrative voice; contemplative and sombre, Tony's voice signals to the reader that he is working through some yet-to-be-revealed sorrow. Grief makes a more overt incursion into the narrative with Robson's

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sudden suicide. Because Tony is not close with this other student, his grief is depicted primarily through the way in which he and his friends crack jokes and attempt to make sense of the suicide; these instincts nonetheless indicate Tony's grief-fuelled impulse to bargain with and deny death. The theme arises again with Adrian's suicide. Tony and Alex meet to discuss it, unsure whether to view it as "fucking impressive or a fucking terrible waste." In the second part of the book, grief arises again with Sarah Ford's death. While her death means little to Tony, to Veronica it is far more significant because of the way it affects her half-brother, Adrian Junior. As a developmentally disabled man, Adrian Junior has a particularly difficult time coming to terms with the loss of his elderly mother. However, through each of the examples Barnes depicts, it becomes clear that no one in the book quite knows how to make peace with the death of someone close.

### **The Lost Queen**

#### **Summary:**

Signe Pike was born in Ithaca, NY, and graduated from Cornell University with her Bachelor of Science in Communication. She worked as an acquisition's editor at Random House and then Penguin, before leaving to write her first book, *Faery Tale: One Woman's Search for Enchantment in a Modern World*. Pike has spent the past ten years researching and writing about Celtic history, myth, folklore and tradition. Her love of history, the great outdoors, early medieval and ancient archaeology, and her dedication to historical accuracy has made her social media feeds an informative delight to her readers.

In *The Lost Queen*, Signe Pike dives deep into Welsh and Scottish myth to bring a fresh look at the legend of Arthur & Merlin. Pike takes readers back to 550 A.D to Goddeu, a small kingdom in Scotland, where Languoreth, a ten-year-old princess, and her twin brother, Lailoken, are mourning the death of their mother. Bereft and grieving, both young kids are fearful of what the future holds for them.

In this historical-fantasy novel, first of a planned trilogy, Pike covers thirty years of Languoreth's life in medieval England, where her people are fighting a physical battle for land against the invading Anglo-Saxons, and a spiritual battle against the rise of Christianity.

Through Languoreth's eyes, readers learn of the bravery of the Dragon Warriors who fight under the leadership of Emrys Pendragon (decades before King Arthur's time). Readers get a glimpse of the machinations of Tutagual's court as he ruled the kingdom of Strathclyde from Dumbarton Rock. Lailoken, her brother, is none other than the man who will one day be known as Merlin. The political climate of Briton pushes the twins on different paths, and one day they find themselves on the opposing side of a major battle.

Pike's writing is transportive, both geographically and historically, making it the book's strongest feature. However, strong historical premise and beautiful writing do not make up for the silly, impetuous, and frankly uninteresting protagonist that is Languoreth.

To read the entire book from Languoreth's point of view is exhausting and infuriating. She comes across as a spoiled, entitled princess who thinks herself the epitome of grace and

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intellect. As the novel is narrated through her point of view, the frequent self-aggrandizement is jarring to read. It's not only that Languoreth seems bland, but that everyone else around her seems far more interesting.

For instance, what is going on in Lailoken's head, who has been itching to be a warrior since he was ten years old? What makes Ariane appear at King Morken's court and serve his family so faithfully, and why are her ways different from other Wisdom Keepers? Or why is Lord Rhydderch, Languoreth's suitor, so different from his tyrant father and brother? Readers don't really get to dive into any of these characters, and instead all we hear are the inner self-serving ramblings of a teenage girl. From a style perspective, the narration could have enjoyed multiple first-person POVs or just a simple third-person narration.

The pacing is also uneven, as some pages drag on, and some move with breakneck speed. Sometimes, Pike gets carried away with the beauty of medieval Scotland and provides long and detailed descriptions of flora and the landscape which, to be fair, some readers might enjoy.

Pike's novel is well-researched and richly detailed on the governing issues of the time. I am more knowledgeable having read it. However, the importance of the myths and legends that Pike has built her novel around is lost by placing Languoreth at the center of the story.

**Critical analysis:**

If you squint, there are aspects of both of these aforementioned franchises. For instance, Languoreth's (the titular "lost queen"), foster brother, Gwenddolau becomes known as Uther Pendragon. On the Outlander front, The Lost Queen does take place in Scotland during the sixth century, and there is one romance, but it is definitely not the focus of the novel at all. There are also not copious amounts of steamy romantic scenes like in the Outlander series. To be honest, The Lost Queen gave me more of a Pillars of the Earth feel, but with far less perspectives and narrators.

The Lost Queen follows Languoreth, daughter of one of the 13 "petty" kings of Scotland, and twin to Lailoken. The two are raised in the Old Ways, and her brother is trained to become a Wisdom Keeper, which is basically a druid, and a combination of augur, mystic man, and counselor. Languoreth is bitter that she is unable to become a Wisdom Keeper herself, and is solely destined to make a good marriage for her family. Throughout The Lost Queen, one really wants to struggle with Languoreth's characterization. As a child, she is far too aware to be believable as an actual child. As an adult, she's supposed to be wise, poised, and the perfect woman to preserve the sanctity of the Old Ways in a marriage to the son of the High King, who increasingly supports Christianity.

In actuality, Languoreth possesses few queenly qualities, despite the novel's many assurances that she does. In reality, she's impulsive, whiney, and selfish and instead of making things better for her people and their way of life, she unfailingly makes them worse for everyone involved. It is quite frustrating to watch her sabotage everything again and again. The Lost Queen could have benefited from switching in between some of these casts of characters in order to better flesh them out as well, especially as their development seems defined by their one role.



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At the very least, it would've been better served *The Lost Queen* to switch between the twins' perspectives, as they are supposed to have such a strong bond, and as the novel pushes Lailoken as the future legendary Merlin. Despite repeated assurances, the bond between Lailoken and Languoreth feels shallow and one sided. Only Languoreth seems particularly tuned into her twin, who seems much more interested in gallivanting with the Pendragon forces and sleeping with women, then what is going on with his family. Sadly, the only time the twins' "bond" comes into play is when it's convenient for the plot to do so.

Similarly, the main romance of the novel is rather poorly developed. Though Languoreth's secret paramour, Maelgwen is dreamy, with his green eyes, dark hair, and warrior's body, there's not much to him other than falling for Languoreth at first sight and serving in her foster brother's army. In the decades the novel spans, the two only meet a handful of times, and never involves much conversation or substance. Their relationship does not even come close to *Outlander's* Jaime and Claire's timeless love story, so going into the novel with those kinds of expectations will only lead to disappointment for the reader.

Despite the less than stellar characterizations, one can enjoy other parts of *The Lost Queen*. The time period in Scotland, as well as all of the traditions of the Old Ways, like the celebrations of Beltane and Samhain, all the allusions to the Picts and their different way of life are notable things to relish. We also never see Languoreth preparing to become a future queen and learning lessons of etiquette, court politicking, or anything else remotely useful that could have helped the poor girl learn some much needed self-possession and subtlety.

Author Signe Pike does do a fairly good job of depicting the mounting tensions between the Christians and the practitioners of the Old Ways. Languoreth, as a daughter of the Old Ways, marrying into a Christianity-supporting royal family, is specifically well-positioned to relate the challenges of these two worlds merging. Even though Languoreth doesn't do even a remotely good job at bridging these worlds, she does well telling of the challenges. It might have looked better if the book had had more of an opportunity beyond meditating, collecting herbs, spotting a stag or birds that might be portend an omen, and visiting a holy hill to witness the Old Ways. There is sadly not much of the magic of Camelot, as claimed, in *The Lost Queen*.

However, if you enjoy reading about Scotland's history during the tumultuous times of the spread of both Christianity and Anglo-Saxons, there's plenty to entertain. *The Lost Queen* is more historical fiction than either legend or romance, and it does a pretty decent job immersing you in the world of Scotland back then, even with an unreliable heroine at its helm.

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